

Demagogue North defeated despite Republican sweep

by Nancy Spannaus

The overwhelming victory of the Republican Party in the U.S. midterm elections on Nov. 8 reflects an ugly, reactionary mood in America which is currently being mobilized around a fascist political agenda. That agenda, as defined by incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), is a free-market nightmare modeled on Thatcherism, and committed to sacrificing whole sections of the American population on the altar of “less government,” the “balanced budget,” and anti-foreigner sentiment.

But, despite the fact that the Republicans now have a majority of eight seats in the Senate and of more than 15 in the House, there is no assurance that such an agenda will sail through the legislative process. To do so, Republicans would have to savage the very constituencies who thought that they were electing people who would help them out, and, when the euphoria passes, some of them are going to realize this. In addition, they are going to be confronted in a nationwide campaign led by Lyndon LaRouche, with the fact that the Gingrich “Contract with America” is a product of the fascist economics of Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman.

The credibility of LaRouche and his political associates is greatly enhanced right now, because they played the critical role in the defeat of the most famous Republican challenger in the election, Oliver North. North’s defeat by Democrat Charles Robb couldn’t have been accomplished without the efforts of the LaRouche-backed Defeat that Son-of-a-Bush Committee, which provided the critical ammunition and political environment for North to be smashed.

A Thatcherite agenda

It should not be assumed that the electorate in the Nov. 8 election knew what it was “for”; it mostly reflected an angry

rejection of the status quo. Some 54% of the registered voters (133 million Americans out of a potential voting age population of 190 million) turned out to vote out many incumbent Democrats, who had become a target of their rage. The ugly mood was most visible in the vote for the anti-immigration measures in California (see p. 70) and in the votes for Republicans who promised massive tax cuts at the expense of the poor and disadvantaged, and a more bloodthirsty approach to corrections and executions.

But the vocal leadership of the House (Gingrich) and the Senate (Gramm) have chosen to define the vote as a mandate for their “Contract with America.” Gingrich, who has received aid from Thatcherite Tories both in this election and in 1992, has an explicit anti-government agenda. Gramm, a self-proclaimed free-trade economist and author of the Gramm-Rudman Balanced Budget Amendment of the Reagan years, gave a press conference on Nov. 9 in which he emphasized the need to get the “40 million people who are riding the wagon to get out and help the rest of us pull it.” Presumably this meant cutting off social programs and entitlements, as well as Aid to Dependent Children, which does not reach anywhere near that many people.

The “Contract with America” is a combination of populist government reforms—such as term limits, applying the same laws to Congress as to other citizens, and restrictions on government size—and draconian fiscal and social measures. The first priority, Gramm and others have asserted, is a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment would result in murderous cuts for large sections of the populace, and would outlaw the Hamilton national banking reforms which are essential for restoring U.S. national sovereignty and economic health.

At his press conference the day after the election, Presi-

dent Clinton indicated that he would try to work with the new Republican majority, but that he would not return to the policies of the 1980s. "A lot has changed since yesterday," said the President, "but what hasn't changed is the reason I was sent here and the reason members of the Congress will be sent here: to restore the American dream and to make this country work, this government work, this city work for the interests of ordinary Americans again."

The North exception

There were four prominent exceptions to the Republican sweep: 1) the victory of longtime liberal Ted Kennedy; 2) the defeat of Republican Jeb Bush for governor of Florida; 3) the victory of Democrat Diane Feinstein over Michael Huffington in California; and 4) the defeat of multi-millionaire demagogue Oliver North in Virginia.

The defeat of North was by far the most dramatic, and deserves extensive analysis, especially since the method by which it was accomplished provides a model for defeating the nationwide fascist program of ideologues like Gramm. North spent \$20 million on advertising, direct mail, and other things. He also enjoyed the benefit of the political machine provided by Pat Robertson's misnamed Christian Coalition and by Jerry Falwell, both of whom have their headquarters in Virginia.

North was also aided by the fact that his major opponent, incumbent Charles Robb, had been tarred by personal scandals, and that the Democratic Party mounted a lackluster campaign at best during most of the election season.

But, despite his predictions up to the very last minute that he would win by 3% on the basis of the rural-suburban vote, North was defeated by 3%. Robb won 46%, North 43%, and independent Republican Marshall Coleman won 11%, making it the most expensive *loss* in U.S. history as well. The question everyone is asking is, how did it happen.

How North was defeated

There is no question but that the Virginia Senate race became the hottest election in the country. At least two-thirds of registered voters turned out, as compared with 54% elsewhere. There was a massive turnout of African-Americans for Robb, on the heels of former Gov. Douglas Wilder's endorsement and campaigning for his former rival. At the last moment, the Democratic Party activated a get-out-the-vote apparatus which had been invisible earlier in the campaign. North was also hurt by the Coleman candidacy, the attack by Nancy Reagan, and other disaffections in the Republican Party.

But North's defeat would have been impossible without the high-profile organizing efforts of the Defeat that Son-of-a-Bush Committee, led by this author. Up until three weeks before the election, the SOB Committee had the only aggressive campaign against North, both on the airwaves and on the ground. Anyone who wanted to organize around the crim-

inality of the former National Security Council aide and Bush lackey, had to depend upon the material put out by the SOB Committee. Activist networks were buzzing with the well-documented expose of North's drug-running, among other crimes, long before it broke in the *Virginia Pilot* and the *Washington Post*.

The SOB Committee, which spent no more than \$150,000 over the 17 weeks of its existence, knew that it couldn't defeat North on its own, but set out to create a controlled environment in which North would help destroy himself. This began to work about six weeks before the election. On Sept. 29, the SOB Committee put out its first of three, half-million leaflet runs against North, highlighting the drug issue, and blitzing northern Virginia. On Oct. 4, North began to fumble in public, starting with a high school appearance where he denied lying to Congress, although he had admitted to such lying before.

North's "misstatements" escalated from there on. Soon afterwards, his handlers began to hide him from the public, and from his supporters. The candidate was becoming paranoid about what he might be asked, and what he might let slip.

The Defeat that SOB Committee escalated, and found ready collaborators. Leading members of Senator Robb's African-American machine began to distribute SOB literature en masse, as did labor leaders who knew full well what a threat to family values and living standards North represented. Dozens of union leaders are known to have distributed large numbers of pamphlets and leaflets in the Tidewater area, in the Lynchburg-Roanoke area, and further south. Democratic activists in northern Virginia were also catalyzed into action in the environment created by the SOB radio and leaflet blitzes.

In addition, the SOB Committee carried out a direct intervention into the heart of what the Robb campaign had written off as "Ollie country"—Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Lynchburg, and the suburbs of Richmond. Volunteers distributed exposés on Ollie directly to more than 15,000 homes in Virginia Beach, where Robertson's broadcasting company is located. Soundtrucks, radio ads, and distributions of literature also saturated nearby Chesapeake, home of the Christian Coalition, and other cities in Tidewater.

The final blow to North's campaign came with his slip on "voluntarizing" Social Security, which was the subject of the last mass leaflet by the SOB Committee. That leaflet pinned North as a devotee of the Phil Gramm school of free trade that will ravage the weak in our society, and dismantle the moral commitments of our government. North is like Hitler, the leaflet charged, using the "little man" to get in power and then discarding those he can't use.

North was defeated for now, but the outlook and movement which he represents is a live threat. If it is exposed as the fascist program it is, however, it is to be hoped that the entire American people will join Virginians in rejecting it.